DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 201 015 CS 503 337

AUTHOR Ehrenhaus, Peter
TITLE A Conceptual Model of Rhetorical Community.
PUB DATE Apr 81
NOTE 25p.: Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Central States Speech Association (Chicago, IL, April 9-11, 1981).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Communication Research; Fantasy; *Models; *Rhetoric; *Social Structure; *Speech Communication; Systems Approach
IDENTIFIERS *Fantasy Theme Analysis; *Rhetorical Community

ABSTRACT

A conceptual model of the rhetorical community that addresses the sociodramatic processes through which social order evolves, is maintained, can change, and is threatened is presented in this paper. Following an introduction, the paper identifies the various uses of rhetorical vision and rhetorical community that are found in fantasy theme literature. Secondly, the paper discusses fantasy theme analysis as it applies to social reality and then provides a viewpoint for defining social reality. Thirdly, the paper develops the model's logic and, fourthly, it explains the uses and potential impact of fantasy in argument upon rhetorical community. (FL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED201015

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF RHETORICAL COMMUNITY

Peter Ehrenhaus, Ph.D.
Department of Communication
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Peter Ehrenhaus

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Central States Speech Association Convention
April 9-11, 1981, Chicago

CSSA3337

A Conceptual Model of Rhetorical Community

Fantasy theme analysis[1] is among the numerous research methods available to communication scholars. This method has been applied to various objects and contexts, among them speeches,[2] political events,[3] movements,[4] and social commentary and role instruction.[5] Sharf has recently suggested that fantasy theme analysis may provide a fruitful approach to the study of private discourse.[6]

Among the concepts associated with fantasy theme analysis is rhetorical community. It has been used in most, if not all, of the many studies employing fantasy theme analysis. No study, however, has ever elaborated upon the variety of uses to which fantasy may be put to influence the structure and functioning of a rhetorical community. It is my purpose in this paper to focus upon the relationship of fantasy use to social order and change in rhetorical communities. I shall propose a conceptual model of rhetorical community in which community evolution, maintenance, change, and decay are influenced by the uses of fantasy in argument.

Hugh Duncan has addressed the dramatic basis of social order. Over the course of his career, he devoted his energies to developing a "sociodramatic model of symbolic action as social action."[7] Duncan's model[8] concerns the structure of social order and the functions drama serves in the maintenance and development of that structured social order. However, he did not elaborate upon the dramatistic processes in which social order is maintained. The model I shall discuss is directly concerned with the ways in which fantasy themes in argument work to define and redefine the scope, direction, and membership of rhetorical community.

Two terms are key to the development of this model--rhetorical vision and rhetorical community. These concepts are often employed loosely and inconsistently in the fantasy theme literature, even within individual pieces of research. As Hawes[9] notes, modeling requires concepts to be systematically related to each

other in order to be meaningful; the logical prerequisite is that concepts have clear and consistent referents.

The paper will be developed in four sections. First, I will identify various uses of rhetorical vision and rhetorical community found in the literature. Second, since fantasy theme analysis is applied to social reality, I will also provide a viewpoint for defining social reality. Third, I will develop the model's logic. And fourth, based upon the model's logic I will discuss the uses and potential impacts of fantasy in argument upon rhetorical community.

Rhetorical Vision and Rhetorical Community

According to Bormann, a rhetorical vision is the product of "composite dramas which catch up large groups of people in a symbolic reality."[10] It is constructed of fantasy themes that have chained out and it contains dramatis personae and typical plot lines. Bormann offers the colonial Puritans' view of the world as a rhetorical vision. "Such a vision gave to every social and political action a sense of importance." It "also gave meaning to each individual within the movement."[11]

Thus, a rhetorical vision gives a group a sense of purpose in a superordinate goal by portraying the benefits of following a certain course of action and by using particular criteria to interpret events in the everyday world.[12] Duncan has also identified this rhetorical function of drama. Drawing upon Burke's notion of salvation, Duncan secularizes deep belief in ultimate functions. "The value, purpose, end, or goal of any act is 'beyond' reason in the sense that no one before he acts can really 'prove' that a specific end will follow from certain means . . . But lack of proof has little effect on belief, for we use our belief in the end or purpose of an act to organize action in the present."[13]

The criteria used for interpretation by those who partake in a vision only have significance insofar as they identify particular relationships and causal

forces in the world, and adhere to particular rules of social organization among themselves. Individuals are bound together by certain rules of relationship that make sense only when they are viewed in the context of working toward some goal. The vision must present a clear picture of the kind of goal being sought, and how the efforts of individuals and other forces influence the likely attainment of that goal. Since the vision is a guide for living in the fullest sense,[14] it will also provide the criteria for commentary upon the here-and-now events of the community.

A rhetorical community is defined by those who "chain in" to a rhetorical vision. However, some of the examples in the literature confuse this point, affixing the label of community to those who share in something less than the notion of rhetorical vision just described. We find examples of the Puritans and 1960s counterculture advocates grouped along with those who coalesce around foreign policy and taxation issues. The question of lifestyle is relevant to the first two examples, yet not so to the latter two. The distinction rests with the kind of goal-seeking activity which is the <u>basis</u> for organizing. The first two examples concern an enduring and superordinate goal that implies questions of human relationship, purpose, and values; the latter two concern immediate and practical issues and goals, such as those reflected in special interest groups. Community has been alternately conceived of as a formal organization,[15] the subset of a formal group that shares in a vision,[16] a movement or organization,[17] and as those who would support a particular campaign.[18] Taken together, these diverse conceptualizations may lead one to conclude that a rhetorical community may or may not have enduring concerns, it may or may not be an enduring social unit, and it may or may not have any particular degree of social order.

The concept of rhetorical vision has been employed both with reference to transcendent goal-seeking, the notion which Bormann articulated,[19] and to short

term goals and problem solving. Bormann writes of the significance of the label "New" that is attached to a movement. The "New Politics was more than politics according to its rhetoric; it was a movement that encompassed all of life from aesthetics to social style. Or, put another way, politics was elevated in the vision of the McGovernites into the fundamental and all important drama of life."[20] Pages later, the concept of rhetorical vision is limited to the campaign to elect McGovern, a goal of immediate and terminable concern.

It seems clear that the concepts of rhetorical vision and rhetorical community can be applied, perhaps with equal success, to a wide range of social collectivities which have a wide variety of goals as the basis for their formation. Yet for the purposes of modeling, sharper delineations will be made along the lines of goal-seeking activity and the implications a vision has for lifestyle and for the use of "ideological templates"[21] for interpretation.

Social Reality

These "ideological templates" are used to interpret social reality, the stuff which fantasy theme analysis attempts to understand. The range of issues over which these templates are placed by individuals provides us with an indication of whether they are members of a rhetorical community or whether they share membership in something less than a rhetorical vision.

Just as criticism can be viewed as ephemeral or enduring,[22] so can social reality. Social reality can be divided into those lasting understandings of past events, social rules, and symbolic processes, and into ad hoc interpretations of immediate, fleeting events that, in a sense, intrude upon the pursuit of some superordinate goal. The view of social reality that is consistent with our concepts of rhetorical vision and rhetorical community is enduring social reality; Puritans and 1960s counterculture advocates would seem to fall in this grouping since their concerns were with human relationships, lifestyle, values,

and superordinate goals. Those who would coordinate their activities around issues of foreign policy or taxation find their organizing stimulus in ephemeral social reality. While they may generate fantasies of their own which enhance social cohesion, and while they may have resemblances to rhetorical communities, our rules for modeling require that they be labeled something else.

Since members of a rhetorical community may respond differently to the various problems and issues that arise in the course of everyday life, community members may coalesce around particular issues. These heirarchically lower level groupings may be seen as subsystems of a rhetorical community. These subsystems define their goals in ephemeral social reality. These subsystems compete to the extent that different criteria are selected to interpret events and issues in the everyday world. A likely reason for these divergences is that rhetorical visions are inherently ambiguous and incomplete. It is the relationship of these subsystems to the heirarchically higher level system of rhetorical community to which the model speaks.

The Logic of the Model

In this model, rhetorical community is viewed as a naturally occurring complex social system. As Buckley[23] notes, these social systems are characterized by a propensity to change. The model draws upon the criteria for structural-functional systems.[24] Certain features and functions of rhetorical community are better explained with concepts associated with other of the systems theories,[25] a necessity brought about by the fact that while systems theories are based upon logical necessity, human social systems are often not quite so elegant and precise. The propensity toward change and the highly adaptive character of human social systems may, in part, explain this inelegance.

The essential features of this model are rhetorical community and rhetorical vision, which have already been defined, and two analagous lower level components—rhetorical bloc and rhetorical depiction. A rhetorical depiction,

like a rhetorical vision, is a composite of dramas involving dramatis personae, typical plot lines, and a goal. However, that goal, which is the organizing stimulus for those who chain in to the depiction, is located in ephemeral social reality. The problem or issue, which creates some psychological tension for certain individuals,[26] does not concern "life in the fullest sense," but concerns a problem or issue of narrower scope which has the potential for rapid resolution. Goal attainment is potentially short term. For example, if we arbitrarily define the United States as a rhetorical community,[27] then those who coalesce around the issue of gun control and who generate dramas pertinent to that issue, within the boundaries of the rhetorical community, would be creating a rhetorical depiction. The advocates of that depiction we may label a rhetorical bloc.

The environment in which the system of rhetorical community operates is potentially turbulent. Rhetorical communities may co-exist to the extent that their interests and rules of organization and procedure are similar or complement each other, or they may directly compete for the membership of each other's community. The Mennonites and the Hutterites, while politically within the United States, are rhetorical communities in their own right. They both have visions of their own that pertain to ultimate goals and their community cultures are established to strive towards those goals. Neither community competes with the other or with the United States, (a community which in some ways is far more difficult to define.) Other rhetorical communities confront each other. The 1960s counterculture directly confronted the mainstream American community culture; recent memory tells us as much.

A rhetorical community will exist as long as its members associate themselves with the continuing representations of the rhetorical vision that binds its members together. To be successful, indications of the vision must be continually re-presented through everyday life events in order to make

everyday life meaningful in terms of the community's superordinate goal. These re-presentations work to justify the community's social order by emphasizing the values in that social order. Thus, in order to achieve a "worker's paradise," a particular style and degree of social organization is required. Through re-presentation of the vision, in which everyday events are made sensible, community members can see the merits of their own activities in terms of progress towards the community's superordinate goal. If this link between the everyday and the transcendent is lost or is subject to serious question, (as when the value of equality is shown to be inconsistent with the practice of slavery,) then the community may weaken or decay.

How and why does a rhetorical community form? According to Monge,[28] natural systems create themselves in response to some form of environmental challenge. Bormann[29] suggests the same kind of impulse. Individuals who are dissatisfied with the community of which they are a part may begin to represent their social reality dramatistically, using dramatis personae and typical plot lines to identify good and evil, to define their struggle, and to indicate how they can prevail. In a similar vein, Buckley[30] speaks of "felt blockage," which creates in individuals motivation to reduce tension. And as Bormann notes, a function served by engaging in fantasy is to address goal-seeking activity which is frustrated.

In its incipience, a community's foundational values arise as the superordinate goal in the vision becomes articulated. This goal is indicated abstractly in phrasing such as "eternal salvation," "a worker's paradise," "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," or "a shining city on the hill." The values which underpin the vision often emerge in cultural myths which are modified to meet the needs of the moment; the vehicle of expression has been labeled the fantasy type.[31]

Over the course of a vision's existence, dramas are articulated, elaborated,

and recalled as they become part of the community's developing explanatory system. A system generates information; in the case of a rhetorical community, the information is specific symbolic patterns which imply certain values and the use of particular ideological templates. A system also develops a memory, in which this information is stored, manipulated, and which is available for retrieval at a later time. Taken together, the dramas stored in the memory of the community system constitute a nebulous view of social reality and of how life should be led. I call this view nebulous because, reasonably, all of the system's information cannot be called upon at one time, nor will it be arranged in one particular way. Different rhetors will call upon different symbolic patterns and combine those patterns in different ways; here is the domain of artistry and creativity.

The fact that an expression of a rhetorical vision is selective and always incomplete means that when we speak of a rhetorical community and its rhetorical vision, we are speaking of an arbitrarily defined system. This is an idealized community--those people who would, in our estimation, chain in to a certain range of dramatizations of the prevailing forces of social reality and to the rules of social relationship that would guide them to some desired end.

Few rhetorical communities have sharply defined boundaries. However, various expressions of a rhetorical vision will have resemblances among them since the information used in all of the expressions is drawn from the same memory. Part of a rhetorical vision is expressed whenever a rhetor uses fantasy to address transcendent, enduring concerns of the system, or makes reference to the system's dramatic past events and personae. The researcher can develop a sense of a community's boundaries by noting who appropriates consistently the related set of ideological templates re-presented in the various expressions.[32]

The Uses of Fantasy in the Operation of the Rhetorical Community

To this point, I have identified two major components in the operation of a rhetorical community: the rhetorical vision, which finds its generative impulse in a concern with enduring issues of lifestyle, human relationship, and ultimate goals, and the rhetorical depiction, which finds its generative impulse in a concern with problems and opportunities in ephemeral social reality—goals that require attention in everyday life and which can potentially be reached in the immediate future. The latter of these components, the rhetorical depiction, can interact with the rhetorical vision; if and when there is information transfer between these components, then the depiction becomes a functioning sub-system of the rhetorical community.

Information transfer is a defining characteristic of interdependence. If we define rhetorical communities and blocs as intentional social systems, since they are goal-seeking systems, then transfered information is used in striving towards the respective goals of those systems. Rhetorical community and rhetorical bloc are therefore interdependent to the extent that information stored in the two systems' memories is transfered. The information may be transfered in two ways. One system may intentionally appropriate information stored in the other system's memory, or one system may impose for its own purposes information stored in its own memory upon the other system.

Fantasy theme analysis can be applied to the study of social collectivities while ignoring competing social systems or higher or lower level systems.[33] However, by taking this rather isolated viewpoint of a rhetorical system, we inevitably must ignore important external inputs into that rhetorical system's adaptive processes. By focusing upon the quality and extent of a rhetorical system's relationships with other systems, our understanding of those adaptive processes can only be enhanced.

As I have stated, a rhetorical community and a rhetorical bloc are interdependent

to the extent that they draw upon each other's rhetorical resources or to the extent that a community or bloc imposes its information upon the other. This is simply an empirical question.

A more important question concerns the use of that information. Here we address the quality of interdependence between a community and a bloc--how they can mutually influence the nature of each other's vision/depiction, the outcome of decisions made in the pursuit of their respective goals, and the composition of their group memberships. How the information is used in the course of argument will have implications for the adaptive processes of the interdependent system and subsystem.

Toulmin's[34] model of argument can be used to unpack the various uses of fantasy in argument. Figure 1 identifies the full range of possible uses of fantasy for interdependent blocs and communities, as well as identifying the system theoretic labels for those functions. In the remainder of the paper, I shall discuss those uses that are denoted by letter.

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

Figure 1 here

- - - - - - - - - - - - -

A) Bloc uses Community fantasy for Data:

A rhetorical bloc can appropriate fantasies from a rhetorical community's vision for its own ends; enduring social reality can be used to reach goals in ephemeral social reality. Campbell[35] argues that enduring fantasies which reflected key community values were appropriated and intertwined with the pro-Carter bloc in the 1976 presidential campaign. Campbell suggests that pro-Carter fantasies were strategically linked with the community's fantasies about their heritage and their essential character, as well as with those values being celebrated in the Bicentennial. This linking was a significant factor which contributed to Carter's success in the election.

A similar tactic is being employed by the Reagan forces. Reagan is not

only the primary rhetor and dramatis persona of a rhetorical bloc, but he also presents himself as a rhetor of a community vision; he articulates this vision under the label of "A Community of Shared Values." In this fashion, portrayals of enduring social reality are intertwined with here-and-now portrayals of Reagan. Electing Reagan then becomes the proper decision in ephemeral social reality as the electorate strives towards its superordinate goal in enduring social reality.

B) Bloc uses Community fantasy as Warrants:

A rhetorical bloc can appropriate a vision's values for interpreting events and attaining goals in ephemeral social reality. The formal political arm of Rev. Jerry Falwell's evangelical organization is called the Moral Majority. Its function is to educate, politicize, and register born-again Christians as a means of achieving immeidate political goals. They want to elect to office

> at all levels of government candidates who oppose abortion, the Equal Rights Amendment, gay rights and SALT II, and who favor the Kemp-Roth tax cut proposal, prayer in schools, and a military build-up. According to one evangelist, "We want to see more and more politicians who believe what we believe."[36] The data used in their arguments are fantasies based in the everyday world. Their warrants--those ideological templates--are taken from the evangelical vision. By applying dramatically couched enduring warrants to data in the everyday world, the Moral Majority leads its audience to its claim--that supporting conservative candidates and opposing liberal candidates is a religious obligation.

C) Bloc uses Community fantasy as Backing:

This is a common form of interdependence of community and bloc. It serves a system maintenance function for the bloc by giving the bloc's goal legitimacy. The National Rifle Association is concerned with the right to own and use arms. While its warrant may be based upon a rule in the Bill of Rights, the warrant

is legalistic. Community-based fantasy is incorporated to demonstrate the appropriateness of that warrant for this issue of gun control; the NRA thus articulates in dramatic terms stories about the free and independent spirit of Americans, tracing that spirit to colonial Americans who used weapons for protection, for food, and for freedom's sake. With gun control, there could have been no Lexington or Concord.

D) Community imposes fantasy upon Bloc for Rebuttal:

A rhetorical community may actively seek to stop a rhetorical bloc in its midst by arguing for the inappropriateness of certain of the bloc's warrants. The community may argue that certain warrants are fundamentally inconsistent with the community's organizing principle, and these inconsistencies pose a threat to the stability of social order and social processes. The bloc is seen as an entropic force within the community system; all systems fight the tendency towards disorganization.

The dominant American community has responded in this fashion to blocs whose method violates a focal rule of community procedure. Terrorist and vigilante groups provide two examples. As Duncan[37] states, "Reason in democratic society is born in discussion that depends on disputants who remain loyal to the rules of discussion." Neither type of group offered as examples places much merit in the marketplace of ideas; for this reason, they pose a direct threat to the community.

The difficulty that arises with linkage by rebuttal between a community and a bloc is that community members may not agree upon what constitutes a threat to the community's dynamic equilibrium. Recent attention given to the question of First Amendment rights for Nazis brings this difficulty into sharp focus.[38] What is clear is that under circumstances in which members of a community perceive a threat to their stability, reasoned, discursive discussion will often give way to emotional dramatization.

E) Community uses Bloc fantasy as Data:

Pat Robertson, president of the Christian Broadcasting Network and host of "The 700 Club" articulates his own version of the evangelical rhetorical vision. Unlike Falwell, he believes that "God isn't a right winger or a left winger."[39] His concern is with spreading the gospel for the salvation of all. In his pursuit of this superordinate goal, he draws upon fantasies based in ephemeral social reality, some of which are used by the political right.

In a recent broadcast of his program,[40] his guest was U.S. Representative G. William Whitehurst (R-Virginia), who represents the district in which Robertson's CBN is based. Whitehurst dramatized the frightening state of the world as a result of weak political leadership, political betrayal, and U.S. military weakness; he stated that the next two to five years will be crucial in determining the survival of the United States. Robertson used these ephemeral-based fantasies to claim that a critical judgment day was soon approaching, and our salvation as a Christian nation could only be reached with God's help by prayer, fasting, and spreading the gospel. Unlike Falwell, Robertson refuses to endorse a political candidate. (Interestingly, Whitehurst endorsed Reagan; viewers are left to their own inferences.) Robertson seeks to perpetuate his rhetorical vision. The dramas of the everyday world simply provide grist for his mill.

F) Community uses Bloc fantasy as Backing:

As I stated earlier in the paper, a rhetorical vision provides ideological templates through which sense can be made of the everyday world. However, the inherent ambiguity of a rhetorical vision may lead members of the same community to choose different (but related) templates to interpret an event or issue in the everyday world. Community members will interpret the everday world through those templates they find most salient. A classic dichotomy in the American community is the clash between personal freedom to choose and social

or moral obligation; abortion, gun control, and the draft all fit this pattern. A community rhetor--one concerned with the vision--can "dip in" to fantasies generated by one or another of these factions to sustain the vision. Again, fantasy used as backing serves a maintenace function for the community.

Bormann[41] provides us with examples of fantasies based in the everyday world being used to certify the community's mode of interpretation; everyday events validate the ideological templates the community's vision offers its members. The fantasy type of "Fetching Good out of Evil" is founded upon this relationship. Puritans used a failed crop drama or a drama of a youth's tragic drowning to demonstrate that they had a covenant with God which they had forsaken. Lincoln pointed to a religious dramatization of the Civil War to certify the same principle--the war was punishment for having forsaken that covenant.

In a similar vein, Pat Robertson points to the accuracy of his predictions about the current state of the world which he has based upon his scriptural interpretations. This is proof of the validity of his mode of interpretation. Events in ephemeral social reality certify the ideological templates of a vision, and therefore the full range of implications of a vision for enduring social reality receives a vote of confidence.

G) Bloc imposes fantasy upon Community for Rebuttal through Limitation:

Ephemeral-based fantasies can challenge certain community warrants. When this occurs, systemic change is brought about. This is known as morphogenesis, the process through which the structure of a system changes. With rebuttal through limitation, a rhetorical bloc calls for change in certain of the community's warrants; these changes may refer to values, per se, or rules of relationship which are actions based upon values. While confirming the essential character of the community's vision, such blocs use their depictions to demonstrate inconsistencies between how life should be led and how life is led.

A bloc that applies rebuttal through limitation calls for changes within the social order of the community, but not at the expense of the community or its vision. The rhetors of the civil rights movement dramatized injustice in the here-and-now, pointing to the inconsistency between "is" and "ought." Justice was pointed to as a key community warrant, but "the bank of justice" was "bankrupt." At the same time, the ultimate goal of the community was endorsed; it was "a dream deeply rooted in the American dream."[42]

H) Bloc imposes fantasy upon Community for Rebuttal through Repudiation:

Rhetorical blocs can attempt to repudiate the communities within which they reside. Through repudiation, the community can decay. The task appears to be twofold: the bloc must focus the community's attention through its rebuttals on ephemeral concerns, and the bloc must sustain its rebuttals to invalidate community warrants thoroughly.The community members may come to reorient their view of enduring goals, values, rules of relationship because of the impact of these ephemeral-based dramatizations upon their view of the validity of their ideological templates, their warrants.

By continually interpreting and dramatizing the everyday world, the bloc adds information to its memory, and it may come to develop a competing vision of enduring social reality of its own. In this manner, the rhetorical bloc of colonial American radicals reoriented the larger rhetorical community's view of enduring social reality; by confronting the community with dramatic evidence that invalidated key ideological templates, community members came to reject one vision and embrace the vision that the radicals had developed over a lengthy period of time. The same kind of dramatic interdependence evolved prior to the Civil War. One rhetorical community had one rhetorical vision. Within this community two distinct rhetorical blocs emerged to address temporal concerns—tariffs, voting power reallocation, the admission of slave states—in opposing fashion. Over a course of years, each bloc extended its domain to

include a direct concern with the fundamental issues of a style of life. Through the replay of their own fantasies with plot lines and heroes and villains, each bloc came to articulate an independent vision, complete with superordinate goal. Together, both blocs coopted the community of which they had been subsystems. The original community decayed.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to initiate a conceptual model that addresses the sociodramatic processes throught which social order evolves, is maintained, can change, and is threatened. The interdependence of a system and subsystem, of rhetorical community and rhetorical bloc, can be defined in numerous ways. The exchange of fantasies stored in each other's memories for use as data and warrants concerns the orderly evolution of those social units. The exchange of fantasies for use as backing serves a system maintenance function. Rebuttal through limitation enables system change. Rebuttal through repudiation, if given the opportunity, may ultimately lead to system decay and replacement.

The intent in my examples has been heuristic. I have not tried to chronicle in case study fashion the various modes of interdependence of a rhetorical community and a rhetorical bloc. A model need only indicate how it can be done.

I have only addressed simple relationships—one system to one subsystem, linked through argument in only one way. Clearly, multiple relationships are possible and likely; adaptive processes are inherently complex. Various rhetorical blocs will compete for membership, for attention, and for resources. Unusual alliances may arise, such as when the American Civil Liberties Union defends American Nazis. Different rhetorical blocs' relationships with the rhetorical community of which they are subsystems will be characterized differently and will have different influences upon the community. The functioning of a community may be influenced by other communities.

However, we may be able to strip away much of this complexity when we use the model. A great many system-to-subsystem, subsystem-to-subsystem, and system-to-system relationships can be simply ignored. Defining a system's boundary is arbitrary, as I have noted. Where we choose to place a system's boundary depends upon our research question; this placement will make certain of those relationships irrelevant.

Further, our research questions do not have to lead us to study massive social collectivities. The Hutterite sect, for example, is a small and relatively isolated rhetorical community. We can even extend the definition of rhetorical community to refer to a neighborhood ethnic enclave; as cultures can define a community, so can subcultures, or countercultures, or cultural pockets in cities. On a rather small scale, the concepts of community, vision, bloc, and depiction can be used effectively to investigate the same adaptive rhetorical processes found in much larger social collectivities. The key lies in the criteria we use to define rhetorical community and rhetorical bloc; size is not the issue.

We can unpack the influences of dramatization upon social order and social change more successfully with a clearer understanding of the manner in which these rhetorical systems and subsystems are related, and in which they employ fantasy themes as a sociodramatic mechanism of adaptation. Large scale social collectivities—movements, cultures—stand as ready and accessible patients for our observation of adaptive rhetorical processes. We can find these same rhetorical processes also at work quite literally in conversations across backyard fences or at the neighborhood tavern.

Notes

[1] See Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 58(December 1972), 396-407.

[2] Ernest G. Bormann, "Fetching Good Out of Evil: A Rhetorical Use of Calamity," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 63(April 1977), 130-139; Barbara A. Larson, Prologue to Revolution: The War Sermons of the Reverend Samuel Davies (The Speech Communication Association Bicentennial Monographs, 1978).

[3] Ernest G. Bormann, "The Eagleton Affair: A Fantasy Theme Analysis," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 59(April 1973), 143-159; David L. Rarick, Mary B. Duncan, David G. Lee, and Laurinda W. Porter, "The Carter Persona: An Empirical Analysis of the Rhetorical Visions of Campaign '76," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 63(October 1977), 258-273; Ernest G. Bormann, Jolene Koester, and Janet Bennett, "Political Cartoons and Salient Rhetorical Fantasies: An Empirical Analysis of the '76 Presidential Campaign," Communication Monographs, 45(November 1978), 317-329.

[4] John F. Cragan, "Rhetorical Strategy: A Dramatistic Interpretation and Application," Central States Speech Journal, 26(Spring 1975) 4-11.

[5] Virginia Kidd, "Happily Ever After and Other Relationship Styles: Advice on Interpersonal Relations in Popular Magazines, 1951-1973," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 61(February 1975), 31-39.

[6] Barbara F. Sharf, "Rhetorical Analysis of Nonpublic Discourse," Communication Quarterly, 27(Summer 1979), 21-30.

[7] Hugh Dalziel Duncan, Symbols and Social Theory (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), vii.

[8] Hugh D. Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

[9] Leonard C. Hawes, Pragmatics of Analoguing: Theory and Model Construction in Communication (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1975).

[10] Bormann, "Fantasy," 398.

[11] Bormann, "Fantasy," 402.

[12] Bormann, "Fetching."

[13] Duncan, Symbols in Society, 110.

[14] In "Fantasy," Bormann comments upon the world of the individual within the community defined by the vision. "When a person appropriates a rhetorical vision he gains with the supporting dramas constraining forces which impel him to adopt a life style and to take certain action" (406).

[15] Bormann, "Fantasy," 402.

[16] Bormann, "Fantasy," 403.

[17] Bormann, "Fantasy," 405-406.

[18] Bormann, "Eagleton," 143.

[19] See notes 10, 11, and 12.

[20] Bormann, "Eagleton," 144-145, italics mine.

[21] William R. Brown, "Ideology as Communication Process," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 64(April 1978), 123-140.

[22] Karly Kohrs Campbell, "Criticism: Ephemeral and Enduring," The Speech Teacher, 23(January 1974), 9-14.

[23] Walter Buckley, Sociology and Modern Systems Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.:Prentice-Hall, 1967), 31.

[24] Peter R. Monge, "The Systems Perspective as a Theoretical Basis for the Study of Human Communication," Communication Quarterly, 25(Winter 1977), 19-29.

[25] Richard V. Farace, Peter R. Monge, and Hamish M. Russell, Communicating and Organizing, (Reading, Mass.:Addison-Wesley, 1977). See especially Ch. 3 in which the authors discuss the need to draw upon concepts based in diverse systems

theories in their structural-functional model of organization.

[26] Bormann, "Fantasy," 397. Here Bormann discusses the psychodynamic basis for engaging in fantasy. For the purpose of this paper, I am willing to accept Bormann's explanation. The causal factors in cognitive processing are unknown at this time; these issues are hotly debated, particularly in the attribution theory literature.

[27] Farace, Monge, and Russell, Communicating and Organizing, Ch. 3. The authors state that system boundaries are arbitrarily defined as a function of the purpose for the analysis.

[28] Monge, "The Systems Perspective," 21.

[29] See note 26 above.

[30] Buckley, Sociology and Modern Systems Theory, 51-52.

[31] See Bormann, "Fetching," and Larson, The War Sermons, for detailed examples.

[32] See note 27. The research question will indicate how extensive the researcher's observations need to be in order to define the system boundary.

[33] As Bormann indicated in "Fantasy," "If the critic can illuminate how people who participated in the rhetorical vision related to one another, how they arranged themselves into social heirarchies, how they acted to achieve the goals embedded in their dreams, and how they were aroused by dramatic action and the dramatis personae within the manifest content of their rhetoric, his insights will make a useful contribution to understanding the movements and its adherents' (401).

[34] Stephen E. Toulmin, The Uses of Argument (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958). See Ch. 3, in particular.

[35] J. Louis Campbell III, "Jimmy Carter and the Rhetoric of Charisma," Central States Speech Journal, 30(Summer 1979), 174-186.

[36] "A Tide of Born-Again Politics," Newsweek, 15 Sept. 1980, 28-36. Quotation on p. 28.

[37] Duncan, Symbols in Society, 37-38.

[38] Ruth McGaffey, "Group Libel Revisited," Quarterly Journal of Speech, 65(April 1979), 157-170.

[39] Newsweek, 29.

[40] The 700 Club, Christian Broadcasting Network, 16 Sept. 1980.

[41] Bormann, "Fetching."

[42] Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream," delivered 28 Aug. 1963 in Washington, D.C. In Rhetoric of Racial Revolt, ed. Roy L. Hill (Denver: Golden Bell Press, 1964), 371-375.

FIGURE 1

Modes of Interdependence between a

Rhetorical Community and a Rhetorical Bloc

System	Rhetorical Bloc	Rhetorical Community	
Domain of Goal	Ephemeral Social Reality	Enduring Social Reality	
Source of Information	Community Memory	Bloc Memory	
Uses of Fantasy in Argument:			System Function Served:
Data	A	E	orderly evolution
Warrant	B	**	orderly evolution
Claim	*	*	———
Backing	C	F	morphostasis (maintenance)
Rebuttal	D	G,H	morphogenesis (change) OR entropy (disorganization, decay)

* Since an intentional social system seeks its own goal, it will strive to articulate its own goals and not the goals (claims) of another system.

** A defining characteristic of a rhetorical community is that the community members will interpret social reality through the warrants that the rhetorical vision supplies; a community will not appropriate a bloc's warrant, though a bloc's warrant may come from a community's vision.